The Excellency of Publick Charity.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

UNIVERSITY

OF

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ON THE

Feast of the *Annuntiation*, 1697.

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He hath diſperſed abroad, he hath given to the poor, his Righteouſneſs endureth for ever, his horn ſhall be exalted with honour. The Wicked ſhall ſee it and be grieved, he ſhall gnaſh with his teeth and melt away, the deſire of the ungodly ſhall periſh.

TO Conſider the *Excellency* of *Charity* in general, and that *variety* of ſtrong Motives which engage to the *Practice* of it; how powerful the Language of *Nature* is on its behalf, and how much more ſo the *Word of God*; To conſider, that to refreſh the Bowels of our *Brethren* is to give Eaſe and Comfort to our *own*, and to ſhew *Compaſſion* to *others* an happy Means of taking *Pity* on our *ſelves*; Nay that our *Bounty to the Poor* is truly *Lending unto the Lord*, and relieving thoſe *Wants* which he is pleas'd to tender as his *own*; To conſider what good *Diſpoſitions* this *Excellent Grace* argues, and what good *Effects* it every where occaſions; how great the

preſent Reward of it is, and how much more ſo its *future* ſhall be. This would be of too *large* a compaſs for a ſingle Diſcourſe of this Nature, I ſhall therefore confine my ſelf to the Conſideration of the *peculiar* Excellency of *publick Charity*, and it may not be improper in this Place, at this *Time*, and on this *Occaſion*, to attempt to ſhew the great Charity of *public Foundations*, particularly of that kind, the Benefit of which moſt that hear me this day enjoy.

He who hath in theſe reſpects *diſperſed abroad and hath given to the Poor, his Righteouſneſs endureth for ever, his Horn ſhall be exalted with Honour, though the Wicked ſhall ſee it and be grieved.*

From whence I ſhall take occaſion to diſcourſe,

Firſt, *Of the great Charity of publick Foundations, eſpecially of thoſe which are Nurſeries of Learning and Religion.*

Secondly, *Of the peculiar Honours they reflect upon the Founders of them.*

Thirdly, I ſhall enquire into the Reaſons why, *notwithſtanding all this, theſe Places and the Perſons who more immediately enjoy the Benefit of them, have been in all Ages, and ſtill are the Objects*

of

of many Peoples Hatred, Envy and Ill-will; of theſe in their Order.

And Firſt, *Of the great Charity of publick Foundations.* As God has put ſtrong *Principles* in every Man to engage him in the great Work of his *own Preſervation*, ſo, (becauſe in ſome Caſes he may in no ſenſe be able of *himſelf* to help himſelf) he has both by *Inſtinct* and *Precept* ſubjoin'd the Care of *others* to his own; making Men *mutual Aſſiſtants* to one another towards the *Support* and *Well-being* of the *whole.*

Now thoſe Perſons who to this purpoſe do moſt *effectually* labour for the *Publick Good*, not only ſeeking their *own* but *others* Welfare, and do the *moſt* to repair the *Ruines* which *Sin* has made, theſe are the great *Benefactors* to Mankind, the *Supporters* of Kingdoms and the *Pillars* of the World. Of this ſort are they who not content to extend their *Beneficence* to ſome *few* round about them, move in a *larger* Sphere, and conſult the Good of *Multitudes* not only of the *preſent* but of *future Generations*; who deſire and endeavour that the Effects of their *Charity* may endure as long as the *Wants* of Men

Men, and that their *Miſeries* may not outlive the *Proviſion* which theſe make againſt them; Who provide *laſting Encouragement* to labour, or a *ſure Refuge* to thoſe that cannot work; that contrive the moſt effectual ways that no Man may be *uſeleſs*, but *ſerviceable*, at leaſt not a *Burthen* to the Commonwealth; *Who are* (as Holy *Job* was) *eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame*, and a preſent *help* to thoſe whom the Providence of God has thrown upon the Mercy of *others*, and made it both a *Duty* and *Pleaſure* to adminiſter to their *Neceſſities*.

I believe I need not ſay much to evince the great Charity of Erecting *Hoſpitals*, and ſuch *public Edifices* for their Relief whom *God's Providence* has diſabled from relieving *themſelves*; their *Miſeries* are apt to make deep *Impreſſions* upon our Souls, and we eaſily ſee and feel the *Excellency* of that *Charity* which removes ſuch *pitiable* Objects out of common view, which *binds up their ſores, pours oyl into their wounds*, and prevents their *Infirmities* from being *afflictive* to *others*, and as much as may be from being *grievous* to thoſe that *bear* them. Now the *yernings* within our own bowels do

not

not ſpeak as much on the behalf of *other* works of *publick Charity*, as *this*; yet 'tis certain that the *Conveniences* and good *Effects* that attend them do. Thus the Charity of *employing* the Poor, and furniſhing them with *work*, which may redound to their *Profit* and the *Benefit* of others, is very advantageous to the Good of *Mankind*, and this ſort of *Charity* guided with *Diſcretion* has a large Influence upon the *Happineſs* of any People; for it much increaſes the *Strength*, *Wealth* and *Grandeur* of a Nation, and upon this it is that the moſt *Civiliz'd* Nations have been the moſt *flouriſhing*, and the *Effects* of their *Wiſdom* have been ſeen in the *Proſperity* of the People.

How *barbarous* and ſadly *miſerable* are thoſe Nations where the People are *ignorant* of the *ways* and *means* to provide againſt their *own Wants*, and are left *open* without fence to the *Miſeries* of this World; who *know not* how to employ their *Strength* to their *Advantage* or *Security*, nor for what *purpoſes* God made them what they are; certainly in this regard *they may be compar'd unto the beaſts that periſh*, and are in other reſpects more *miſerable* than *they*.

Again

Again, How remarkably *weak* and *poor* are thoſe Kingdoms and even nigh unto *Deſolation* where *Sloth* and *Idleneſs* prevail and *Induſtry* hath no place? Who ſuffer their Faculties to gather *Ruſt* for want of *Exerciſe*, and take no care to apply their *Abilities* to the *Ends* they were given. *Sacred* Hiſtory mentions *abundance of Idleneſs* as one great *Sin*, and occaſion of the *Ruin* of *Sodom*, and *Profane* Hiſtory informs us that *Idleneſs*, neglect of *Tillage*, *Mechanic Arts* and *Merchandiſe*, brought ſwift *Deſtruction* upon the great *Perſian* Monarchy, and indeed the ſame *Cauſe* will have the ſame *Effects* upon all *States* and *Empires* whatſoever; *Idle Perſons* being like *dead Branches*, which ſerve neither for *Uſe* nor *Ornament*, but are an heavy *burthen* to that *Body* that bears them.

Whereas in thoſe *Kingdoms*, where every Man is *put* and *kept* in a way to be *ſerviceable* in his Generation, and the *Strength* of every *Member* is apply'd as near as may be to the *Suſtenance* and *Support* of the whole *Body*, what can ariſe from hence but *Beauty* and *Strength*, which is not eaſily to be ſhaken by *Diſorders* from within or by *Violence* from *without*, but is very much

much *ſecur'd* from the Force of *both*: A *Nation* thus improv'd is like a ſtately *Fabrick* well laid together, wherein every *Material* is diſpos'd in its *proper Place* and *Order*, whence ariſes the *Comelineſs* (I had almoſt ſaid the *Life*) of the *whole*; but a *rude*, *unpoliſh'd*, *unimprov'd* People are like the *ſame* Materials, *rough-hewn*, *unprepar'd* for Uſe, out of which indeed *fine* things might be wrought, were there but *Artificers* to put their hands upon them, and the *Skill* of the *Workman* to form them into *Uſefalneſs* and *Beauty*.

Now by nothing is this ſo *great* and *good Deſign* more effectually promoted than by ſetting up *Work-houſes*, *Manufactures*, and *Schools* preparatory thereunto; this is the *End* which they aim at, and they cannot generally fail of *Succeſs*; herein many Perſons have an *ingenuous Education* freely beſtow'd upon them, which otherwiſe by reaſon of the *Narrowneſs* of their *Circumſtances* they muſt have wanted for ever, and are train'd up to be truly *uſeful* to *others*, as well as *profitable* to *themſelves*; by theſe means a *Spirit* of *Ingenuity* ſpreads itſelf throughout a *whole Nation*, and the *Improve-*

ments Men from thence receive are to the Advantage of *many Generations.*

It is very certain that Man even in this *degenerate State* is ſtill capable of a great deal of *Perfection*, but it muſt be wrought out, and almoſt any manner of *Wiſdom* muſt be *digg'd for as for hid Treaſure*; for 'tis obſervable, that things of *greateſt Value* are not to be found near the *Surface.* His *Faculties* are not utterly *loſt*, but only *unwieldy* and *benum'd* for want of *Uſe*, he does not ſo properly want *Power*, as *Management*, neither is he deficient in his *Talents* but in his *Improvement*; and it is this *Defect* which thoſe *publick Works* I have been mentioning, do always deſign to *provide* againſt, and do often *effect*: Which makes ſuch *publick Charities* well ordered, *publick Bleſſings*, and the *Authors* of them are very deſervedly call'd *Benefactors*; Benefactors not only to thoſe who *immediately* enjoy the *Effects* of their *Charity*, but to as many as the *wide Influence* of it can *reach.*

But I am more *particularly* concern'd to inſiſt upon the great *Charity* of thoſe *publick Foundations* which are *Nurſeries* of *Learning* and *Religion.* This ſort of *Charity* has that in common

mon with other *publick Charities*, that it is very *extenſive* in its *Deſign* and *Uſefulneſs*, reaching to *Multitudes* not only of *this* but of *future* Ages, making a ſuitable *Proviſion* againſt thoſe *Evils* which are likely to laſt *as long as the Sun and Moon endureth*; but in other Caſes it far *exceeds* them, *they* directly aim at the *temporal* good of Men, *this* chiefly regards their *ſpiritual* and *eternal* Intereſt, the Improvement of the Mind into the *Likeneſs* of God *here*, and an happy *Enjoyment* of him *hereafter*.

In the other *Foundations* Men are bred up to a *regular Uſe* of the Powers of their *Bodies*, in theſe to a *due Exerciſe* of the Faculties of their *Souls*, and that not for their *own Benefit* alone but for the Uſe of *others*, that the *unſpeakable Advantage* of their Improvement may redound unto all.

Herein thoſe who excel others in the Goods of *Fortune* are ſhown the way to do it as much in the Goods of *Nature* and of *Grace*, and to adorn their *high Stations* with ſuch *worthy Actions* as may make them the *Glory* of their *Times*: Herein they are inſtructed how to *manage* and *improve* the *Time* they are ſo much

Maſters of, and the other *Talents* they enjoy, to their *own Advantage* and the *Publick Good*, that their *Leiſure* and *Wealth* may be to *them* Opportunities of *Vertue* and *Goodneſs*, which are to many *others* ſtrong Temptations to *Sin*, and ſad Occaſions of *Falling*.

It is very fit that thoſe Perſons who either by the *Priviledge* of their *Birth*, or the *Choice* of the *People*, are often called to that important Buſineſs of *making Laws*; at leaſt have a *mighty Influence* on all that are round about them, ſhould learn betimes for what *purpoſes* they are by the Providence of God ſo highly *advanced*, and be taught to fill up their ſeveral *Orbs* with a *ſuitable Glory*, that they may diſpence *Warmth*, *Light*, and *Fruitfulneſs* to the Earth. And how much theſe *Places* conduce to theſe *Ends*, let thoſe in *Gratitude* declare who have partaken of the *Advantages* of them; ſure I am, there never was any that truly anſwered the *ends* of his coming hither, that had ever reaſon to repent of ſo *eaſie* a *Purchaſe* of that *Education* which others graciouſly enjoy.

For

For herein alſo many have the Advantages of a *Liberal Education*, for want of which, thoſe who have been Men of Renown in the *Learned World*, might have been forced to ſubmit to more *ſervile Employments*, whilſt the Neceſſities of *this corruptible Body had preſſed down the Soul which muſeth upon many things*; and the *finiteneſs* of their *Thoughts* had gone off in the *ſweat* of their *Brows*. But to bring thoſe of a *lower* Condition almoſt to a *Level* with thoſe of a *higher* with reſpect to the Improvement of their *Natures*, and for the Advancement of *Learning* and *Religion* in the World, herein even *theſe* Perſons have from the *Charity* of others great *Opportunities*, great *Encouragement*, and great *Obligations* to thoſe *Purpoſes*.

Firſt, in theſe *Foundations* they have great *Opportunities* of *Learning* and *Religion*: Indeed, *Time* and *Leiſure* are valuable Advantages, for to the purpoſes I am ſpeaking of, *Time* and *Leiſure* are much required. It is well known how *laborious* the ſearch after *Truth* is, and for any one that would make any conſiderable Progreſs in any *Science*, how neceſſary it is he ſhould *attend* upon it *without Diſtraction*, be free from

from the *neceſſity* of working with his *hands*, while his *head* is thus employ'd, and exempt from the Labours of the *Body*, whilſt he would apply himſelf to thoſe of the *Mind*. But beſides, theſe men from hence receive the beſt *Direction* how to improve their *Time* and *Leiſure* to the beſt *purpoſes*, without which, *Time* and *Leiſure* would be of little value. For Man is ſo little able of himſelf, *to refuſe the evil, and chooſe the good*, that without being brought up *at the Feet of ſome* Gamaliel, *he might be ever learning, and yet never come to the Knowledge of the Truth*: but being well informed by thoſe whoſe *Experience* qualifies them for the *inſtruction* of others, having *Pilots* to guide them in theſe *dangerous Waters*, they make their *Voyage* with a great deal more *Safety* and *Pleaſure*, and much ſooner and eaſier *arrive at the Haven where they would be*; which without ſuch *publick Foundations* would neceſſarily be the *Privilege* but of a *few*. Moreover, by ſuch *publick Nurſeries* of *Learning* and *Religion*, there is a much more *free*, *open*, and *manly* Spirit communicated from one to another, and what by *Emulation* and other *nobler Motives*, they

they are brought to aſpire to *greater Heights* than a *private Education* would ordinarily excite them to. Beſides, by *means* of a *publick Education*, Men become (as *Quintilian* obſerves) more meet for the *Converſe* of the *World* with which they muſt have to do.

And now whilſt I behold the *Rivulets* from theſe *Fountains*, ſpreading themſelves throughout the Land to *make glad the City of God*; whilſt I behold *Church* and *State* refreſhed with theſe *Waters* which from hence plentifully flow; I cannot but bleſs the *Providence* of *God*, who by theſe means ſo liberally *provideth for the Earth*, and admire that *Charity* which is ſo *diffuſive* of its Bleſſings from one end of the *World* unto the other.

Hence proceed Men who by their *Wiſdom* and *Learning*, *are meet for the People, to turn them from Darkneſs to Light, from the Power of Satan unto the Lord, to be Ambaſſadors for Chriſt, and to beſeech Men in his ſtead to be reconciled unto God*, that they may grow in his *Favour*, by the *Practice* of thoſe *Vertues*, which tho' the *Laws* and *Reaſon* of Men have generally *required*, yet *Chriſtianity* alone could ſufficiently *enforce*. Not but that

even

even *theſe Laws* have their ſingular *Uſe*, and will be neceſſary as long as there are others beſides *the Meek that inherit the Earth*, who muſt have their *bounds ſet which they ſhould not paſs*. And this is another Advantage of theſe *publick Foundations*, that require and encourage the Study of the *Laws* of *Nature*, and *Nations* which ought to be the *Foundation* of all other, directing a more *eſpecial Regard* to thoſe *Civil* and *Imperial Laws* which have been generally ſuppos'd to come *neareſt* to the firſt *Principles*, and have long obtained in the World upon that Account: Many of our *Pious Benefactors* had a particular Eye to the Advancement of *this* ſort of *Learning*, which enables Men to ſet an *Incloſure* round each others *Property*, and is the true *Baſis* of *Righteouſneſs* and *Peace*.

Hence proceed *others* alſo, who ſearching into the *Works* of God for thoſe *Antidotes* which his Wiſdom has provided in ſecret againſt the *Miſeries* of the World, do mightily ſupport the *Health* and *Welfare* of the *Body*; by the ſtrength of *other Beings*, they ſuſtain the *Weakneſs* of *Man*, and in great meaſure ſtifle

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the ſeeds of *Corruption* which mingle themſelves with, and often choak the ſeeds of *Life* which they ſupport, and as long as Man is ſubject to ſo many *diſorders* from *within*, and *injuries* from *without*, thoſe that ſtudy their *Cure*, and employ their many *Talents* to ſo good an *end*, will never be eſteemed *unprofitable Servants*, nor thoſe *Places* that encourage them *uſeleſs* to the *World*.

I might mention *others* likewiſe, who applying their Studies to other *purpoſes*, have proved exceeding *uſeful* in their *Generations*: Witneſs thoſe *Mathematical Heads*, who by a *Morning Thought* have ſav'd the *Labour* of ſo many *Ages*; and have ſhewn Men by their *profitable Inventions*, the *readieſt ways* to ſupply themſelves with the *Neceſſaries* and *Conveniences* of *Life* with abundantly greater *eaſe*, thereby abating much of that *part* of the Curſe on Man *In the Sweat of thy Brows ſhalt thou eat Bread*; whilſt theſe *men* by examining into the *Laws* of *Motion* and *Mechaniſm*, do perfect thoſe Arts which are ſo neceſſary for the *Well-being* of *Kingdoms*, and the *Employment* of the *People*, they do more *good* to any *Nation*, than if they

had ſprang a *Mine* of *Gold*, or *pointed out the Place of Silver where they find it.* For as there is great *Force* in *Nature*, almoſt to any *purpoſes*; ſo thoſe that ſearch into this *great Depth*, and vigorouſly endeavour to apply it to the *Uſes of Life*, may be, and often are very inſtrumental to the *Good* of *Mankind*, and a more than *common Bleſſing* to the Earth.

As for thoſe that apply themſelves to the *ſpeculative Parts* of thoſe *Studies*, I believe theſe alſo meet with a *ſuitable Reward* to all their Labours in the delightful *Enlargement* of their *Minds*, and more extended *Capacity* of *Thought*; which qualifies them the better to launch out into the deep *Abyſs* of *Truth*, and to maintain a Commerce with the far diſtant *Regions* of the *Intellectual World.* Beſides theſe Studies, which are eſteemed by many as *Dry* and *Barren*, may be directly exceeding fruitful of *good Thoughts* in the Soul, whilſt in the ſtrange *Harmony* of *Numbers*, and the wonderful, but pleaſing *Proportion* of *Lines* and *Figures*, it has a *clearer* View, and *more affecting* Proſpect of his *adorable* Perfections *who made all things in Number, Weight, and Meaſure.*

But I am inſenſibly ſliding into a *large Field* of Matter, when I have not Time to ſhew the great *Uſefulneſs* of all the *particular Branches* of *Learning*, tho' this would moſt effectually evince the *great Charity* of theſe *Foundations* which happily promote them; but this is leſs neceſſary in *this* place, where Mens *Experience* ſpeaks more feelingly upon this Matter than *Words* can.

Then as for *Religion* in ſuch *Charitable Foundations*; How are Men brought up, not only under a *continual Senſe*, but *Exerciſe* of it; and they muſt be *Proof* againſt very great *Means of Grace* that are not *profited* thereby. The *publick Duties* of a *Chriſtian* ſo *often* and *ſolemnly* performed, muſt naturally have a great *Force* upon the *Soul*, and tend to make Religion *Habitual* by the *conſtant Practice* of it: Herein Men have *ſtrict Precepts*, and *frequent Opportunities* of *Practice*, good *Inſtructions*, and good *Examples* ſet before them; the one repreſenting the *Reaſonableneſs*, the other the *Practicableneſs* of true *Goodneſs*; and it can be no *eaſie matter* to *rebel againſt* ſo much *Light*, and to ſtifle all thoſe *good Motions* which the *happy Circumſtan-*

cumſtances of their *Life* do *force* upon them.

But Secondly, That Men may *effectually* Labour to theſe *great Purpoſes*, they here find an agreeable *Encouragement* attending upon their *Labours*; the *Conveniences* of Life which *theſe Foundations* afford, are a *great Encouragement* to make themſelves *meet to receive them*. It is indeed a *Reproach* to our Natures, that we ſhould ſtand in need of any *additional Encouragement* to be *Wiſe* and *Good*; Wiſdom and Goodneſs being themſelves a *ſufficient Reward*, and *ſtrong Incentives* to the Purſuit of them: but yet the *general Backwardneſs* of *Man* to theſe *things*, makes it neceſſary to add the force of *other Motives*; beſides it is very fit for the *Credit* and *Reputation* of *Learning* and *Vertue* in the World, that as *happy Circumſtances* ſhould attend *them*, as any *other* Employment: Therefore it is provided, that they who ſet themſelves *to ſeek after Wiſdom*, ſhould *have their Reward*; the *Poſſeſſion* of thoſe Advantages, (the *hopes* of which are a *Spur* to ſome) ſhould be a greater *Encouragement* to others, and ſtrong *Motives* to *Diligence* and *Induſtry*, which firſt *qualifie* them for, and then render them *worthy* of theſe Enjoyments.

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But further, the Countenance which is here given to *Learning*, by that *Fellowſhip* in *Study*, which is the Privilege of theſe *publick* Places of *Education*, may be thought no inconſiderable *Encouragement*. *Company* makes any kind of *Labour* go down with *Chearfulneſs*, and *abates* much of the *fatigue* of any *Work*; this renders that Buſineſs a *Pleaſure*, which would be eſteemed a *Burden* and *Toil* were we alone. *Companions* in *this*, as in any *other* Travel, inſenſibly cheat us of the *tediouſneſs* of our *Journey*, and make us leſs mindful of our *Wearineſs*, and more unwilling to *complain* of it; for there is ſome *averſion* in our *Natures* to being *out-done* by our Equals, or *diſtanced* by thoſe who have only the ſame Advantages in common with our ſelves.

What need is there in the Third Place, particularly to mention the great *Obligations* which *theſe Places* lay upon Men to *excel* in the *Knowledge* and *Practice* of *Vertue* and *Goodneſs*: This has been in ſome meaſure hinted at already, for their *Opportunities* are *Obligations*; their *Encouragements*, *Obligations*, *Time* and *Leiſure*, and the *Priviledges* they enjoy, the *Ends* and *Deſigns*

ſigns of their Benefactors, and the *Neceſſities* of their Country, are all of them *Obligations*, and loudly call for an *Improvement* of their Talents. *Chorazin* and *Bethſaida*, Cities that had greater *Opportunities*, and *Means* of *Inſtruction*, according to our Saviour's Argument, have *more* to anſwer for, than *Tyre* and *Sidon* that *wanted* thoſe Advantages which the others *enjoyed*

It is very *natural* (at leaſt, it is very *reaſonable*) for any one to conſider why he is plac'd in ſuch or ſuch a *ſtation*, that *remembring the end, he may not do amiſs*, and whilſt he does conſider what the *Deſign* is for which thoſe *Privileges* were given, how much the matter of his *Calling* requires *Diligence* and *Application*, and how great the *Neceſſities* which muſt be ſerved by it: this Perſon if he was *under no Law*, would be a *Law unto himſelf*, and endeavour to improve that *Time* which is ſo *pretious*, not only upon the account of *himſelf*, but of *others* too.

Upon the Whole therefore, Since *Learning* and *Religion* are ſo highly *advantageous* to the World, ſince the ſeveral *Branches* of them

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do aim at the *reparation* of thoſe Miſchiefs which were occaſioned by the *Fall*, with reference either to our *Bodies*, or our *Souls*; and ſince the *Advancement* of *Knowledge* and *Piety* is much furthered by theſe *publick Foundations*, which afford great *Opportunities*, great *Encouragements*, and great *Obligations* to theſe *Purpoſes*; this ſhews the abundant *Excellency* of that *publick Charity*, from which ſuch *publick Benefits* do ariſe: and ſurely what is pregnant with ſuch *great* and *good Deſigns*, and produces ſuch *bleſſed Effects*, will not ordinarily fail of the *Praiſe* of *Men*, at leaſt not of the *Approbation* and *Praiſe* of God. Which leads me to the next *general Head* of my Diſcourſe, under which, I am to ſhew.

Secondly, The *peculiar Honour*, which ſuch *publick Works* of *Charity* reflect upon him that doth them, *His righteouſneſs endureth for ever, his Horn ſhall be exalted with Honour.* Every Man is more or leſs *truly Honorable*, as he is more or leſs *like* unto *God*, in whoſe Image he was made; *true Worth* claims *Eſteem*, and any *real Excellency* is a Patent for *Honour*. Now there is no Body that expreſſes fairer *Features* of

of the *Divinity*, than the *Charitable Perſon* I am ſpeaking of, and conſequently, no one can ſtand fairer for the good *Opinion* of *Men*, or is more ſure to meet with *Honour* from the *Fountain* of it. Whilſt men behold ſuch *ſtately Edifices* as theſe, how naturally are they lead to conſider the *largeneſs* of his *Mind* from whence they ſprang, and whilſt they conſider the *purpoſes* for which they ſerve, admire the *extenſive Goodneſs* of his *Deſign*, who for thoſe *purpoſes* ordained them; who like his *Creator* ſo happily laboured to *reſcue* Man out of the *Miſery* into which he was fallen, and had ſo great a *Deſire* for, and *Pleaſure in the Proſperity of his Servants*: Certainly, the beſt way to meaſure the *Excellency* of *Charity*, as well as of *Faith*, is by the *Works* of it; moſt Men will *inwardly* eſteem his Vertues, of which they ſee ſuch *glorious Effects*, and out of *Juſtice* to his Character, will endeavour to *ſet forth all his Praiſe*.

Lo! this is the Man which *truſted not in the multitude of his Riches*, but according to *Solomon*'s Precept, *honoured the Lord with his Subſtance*, and with more than *the Firſt-fruits of his Increaſe*.

This is the Man who made to himſelf *Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs*; who when *Riches increaſed, ſet not his heart upon them*, but *diſperſed* them abroad for the *Service* of *Men*, and the *Glory* of *God*; this is the Man who was *Proof* againſt all the Temptations which *Riches* bring along with them, was neither tempted by them to *Luxury*, nor *Covetouſneſs*; neither to *the Luſts of the Fleſh, nor to the Luſts of the Eyes, nor the Pride of Life*; but was a *faithful* Steward of theſe *dangerous Gifts* of God. Such *inward Veneration* muſt good Men have of ſo much Worth, and by ſuch *Approbations* will they expreſs what they *inwardly admire*. Even in this reſpect, *his Righteouſneſs endureth for ever* upon the *Hearts* and *Tongues* of theſe Men, and will be as laſting as the *Effects* of it, even *from Generation to Generation*: To this purpoſe we read in holy Scripture, that *the Memory of the Juſt is bleſſed*; he cannot well be remembred without a kind of *Gayety* of Thought, and *Bleſſing is upon the Head* of him, through whom ſo many are truly Bleſſed: *Whilſt the Memory of the Wicked ſhall rot*, that of *the Juſt ſhall live for evermore*; and as it is writ-

ten Two or Three Verſes above this of my Text, *the Righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting Remembrance*. But then, if in this reſpect, the *Witneſs of Men* is great, the *Witneſs of Angels* and *of God* himſelf *is* much *greater*: If *the Honour that cometh from Men* is ſo very *valuable*, much more that which cometh from *God*, and from *thoſe which are round about him*. How may we imagin, will that Heavenly *Hierarchy* who rejoyce at the *Converſion of Sinners*, pronounce an *Euge* upon *him* who has ſo much further'd their *Converſion!* How will they welcome him into the *Regions* of *Glory*, who has laboured with them in the great *Deſign* of bringing *many unto Righteouſneſs*, who has been their Fellow-helper *in miniſtring to the Neceſſities of the Saints*, and in forwarding their Progreſs toward the End of their Hopes *who are Heirs of Salvation*. How will they *embrace* ſuch an one in the *Arms* of *Love*, and be never better pleaſed, than when they are ſummoned by their *Maker* to *ſet a Crown of pure Gold upon his Head*.

For whereas God hath expreſly declared, that they *that honour him, he will honour*; how muſt the *Adminiſtration of this Service*, which is

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abundant by many Thanksgivings unto God, obtain from him a more than ordinary *Recompence of Reward.* Such *glorious Works* are a great *Credit* to *Religion,* and a moſt ſenſible *Demonſtration* of its *Power*: Many are hence perſwaded to *adore* and *reverence* God, whilſt they obſerve what others do for his Name; whilſt *their Light ſo ſhines before Men,* and they cannot but ſee *their good Works,* they are more eaſily led to *glorifie their Father which is in Heaven*; and conſequently we may be aſſured, that ſuch *Righteous Men,* ſhall not fail of the *Righteous Man's Reward.* They who are thus Inſtrumental in *turning many unto Righteouſneſs, ſhall* (according to that in the Prophet) *ſhine as the Stars for ever and ever*; and thoſe who by their *Means* are converted unto the Lord, ſhall add *new Stars* to their *Crown,* and be a *continual Acceſſion* to their *Glory*: So that whereas moſt others can *work out their Salvation* only while they are here, and then the *Night cometh on* them *when no Man can work*: theſe great and glorious *Benefactors* to *Man-kind,* leave as it were an *increaſing Stock* behind them, which is ſtill improving by *Poſterity* to their Advantage.

In this *Senſe* more eſpecially *their Righteouſneſs endureth for ever*, their *Works* of Charity ſhall *follow them* into the other World, to the mighty *Increaſe* of their *Reward.*

But this kind of *Charity* (as moſt other good Deſigns) hath a *dark* as well as *bright* ſide. This *Vertue*, and the *Subjects* and *Effects* of it, which are of ſo *high a Price* in the *ſight* of *good Men*, of the *glorious Angels*, and of *God the Judge of all*, have yet ſome that caſt *ſour Looks* upon them, and can neither afford them a good *Thought*, *Word*, or *Deed.*

But I am in the *Third* and *Laſt* Place to account for the *Behaviour* of theſe Men, and to enquire why, notwithſtanding what has been ſaid, theſe *Places* and the *Perſons* who more immediately enjoy the *Benefit* of them, *have been* in all Ages, and ſtill *are* the Objects of ſome Peoples *Envy*, *Hatred*, and *Ill-will.* Why the *Wicked*, when they ſee them are *grieved.* Some there are of that unhappy *Temper*, that *they* are never well at eaſe when *others* are ſo, and are truly *miſerable*, becauſe thoſe about them are truly *happy*; they catch *Infection* from the *Health* of others, and from the ſight of their

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Proſperity grow *ſick* and *pine* away: and then it is no wonder if ſuch *Places* as theſe, where there is ſuch *large Proviſion* made for the Happineſs of the World, be *evil-ſpoken* of, and *evil intreated* by ſuch Men. This *unchriſtian Temper*, muſt neceſſarily *grudge* and *fret* it ſelf at theſe things; whilſt the eldeſt Son of Wickedneſs which *ruleth in the Children of Diſobedience*, obſerves how much theſe *Foundations* contribute to the *over-throw* of his *Kingdom*, it cannot be ſtrange, if he ſet his *Agents* on work in all places, by all means to weaken their *Force*, and by raiſing *Prejudices*, *Calumnies*, and *Jealouſies* againſt them, leſſen their *Power*.

Some there are, who either over-looking their *own Faults*, more eaſily eſpy thoſe of *other* Men, and *diſcern a Mote* in anothers, ſooner than *a beam in their own Eye*: Or being uncapable of making juſt *allowances* for the Corruption of *Human Nature*, and Heat of *Youth*, and the Strength which many *Temptations* receive from it, do from the miſcarriage of ſome *few* (moſt of which, perhaps *brought* the *Infection* along with them, or *caught* it elſe-where) unreaſonably *condemn* theſe Places for *their Defects*,

fects; as the Unhealthineſs of the *Child*, is very often without Cauſe thrown upon the *Nurſe*. But *ſuch Societies* ought not in reaſon to bear the *blame*, for the *Unfruitfulneſs* of *ſome* of their *Members*, any more than *Religion* it ſelf, for the *Barrenneſs* of *ſome* of the *Profeſſors* of it. Do Men judge of the *ſoundneſs* of a *Tree* from the *decay* of Two or Three of its *Branches*? ought not rather the *flouriſhing Condition* of the other *Boughs* to ſhadow *leſſer Defects*? and alſo be a *ſufficient Proof*, that the *Fault* is not in the *Stock*, but in the *particular Indiſpoſition* of ſome *Parts* which are unapt to receive *Nouriſhment* from it. Indeed conſidering the great *unſteadineſs* of *Youth*, and the Claim and Right to *Liberty* they at thoſe Years pretend to, and the *Dangers* which ariſe from the firſt Exerciſe of it; conſidering how the *Temptations* they then meet with, are ſuited to the very *briskneſs* of their *Blood*, and *gaiety* of their *Complexion*; it is an *Honour* to theſe *Foundations*, that ſo many are herein *preſerved* from the *Pollutions* of the World; and that by inſtilling *good Principles*, and encouraging *good Practices*, they are able in ſo great a *meaſure* to *ballance* the Weight

Weight of *Corruption* and *Sin*. And if there ſhould be thoſe who ſo *ill* requite the *Charity* and *Care* of others, as not ſenſibly to be *better'd* thereby, it may be a ſtrong Argument of the *wonderful Degeneracy* of ſome *Natures*, but none at all of the *Uſeleſneſs* of thoſe *Foundations*, which endeavour, tho' ineffectually, to *reſtrain* them.

Again, *others* there are, who conſidering how much the Advancement of *Trade* and *Labour*, and ſuch like, is to the *advantage* of any Nation, having their Heads full of *variety* of *Projects* of this Nature, fondly magnifie *one* Way of *Charity* to the *depreſſion* of *another*; and whilſt their *Thoughts* are warm'd with *theſe Things*, they forthwith decry all Perſons as *uſeleſs* to the *Publick*, which are not *ſerviceable* to it in *their* way.

There is in moſt Men a great *Partiality* to their own *Fancies*, ſo great, that they think they cannot do *Juſtice* to the things *they* admire, without doing *Injuſtice* to every thing elſe; and the *Reputation* of *their Deſigns* muſt be built upon the *Ruin* of all other. The *Reaſon* of *this*, I ſuppoſe may be that having a *ſtrong Af-*

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fection toward the Off-ſpring of their *Brain*, as well as any *other*, and turning *thoſe things that pleaſe them* often over in *their Thoughts*, they ſee *the Length, and Breadth, and Depth, and Height* of their *Uſefulneſs*, whilſt *other matters* which have but a *tranſitory Glance* caſt upon them, are not ſo well *eſteem'd*, becauſe not ſo well *underſtood*, and their *Beauty* for want of a *Cloſer View* does not affect them. Yet one would imagine that amongſt a *Civilized People*, it might be a hard matter to find any, that ſhould only value *Men* as they do their *Beaſts*, meerly from the *Strength* of their *Limbs*.

Indeed it will eaſily be allowed, that where theſe *Publick Foundations* which are *Nurſeries* of *Learning* and *Religion*, bear no Proportion or Regard to the *Neceſſities* of the *People*; that is, when they are too many in *Number*, or are as ſo many *Priviledged Places* for men to ſhelter themſelves in from the *Service* of the World; then indeed, as our *Neighbouring Countries* can ſadly teſtifie, they may become a *Burthen* to a Land, and a great *Grievance* inſtead of *Advantage* to the People. For according to S. *Paul's*

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Argument, *If the whole Body were an Eye, where were the Hearing?* In the *Body Politick*, as well as *Natural*, there are different *Members*; and it is not fit, that every *Member* ſhould have the *ſame Office*, for then how is it *poſſible* that the *different Neceſſities* of it ſhould be ſerved? But in this *Nation*, the *Number* of theſe *Religious Houſes* can now be no juſt ground of *Offence*, much leſs their *Diſſervice* to the *Publick*, as was ſhewn above. As therefore *the Eye cannot ſay to the Hand, I have no need of thee*, ſo much leſs can *the Hand ſay to the Eye, I have no need of you*; and conſequently, they that extol *ſome* Works of *Charity*, to the excluſion of *others*, plead for a *Schiſm* in the *Body*, which naturally tends to its *Deſtruction*.

But I fear, the *chief Ground* of *Hatred* lies ſtill behind, I am verily perſwaded, that nothing makes theſe *Places*, or thoſe that ſow or reap the *Benefit* of them, ſo much ſpoken againſt by *different Parties*, as the *Oppoſition* their *Errors* and *Superſtitions* from hence meet with on all Occaſions: (It is *the Wicked*, which when they *ſee* them, are *grieved*, the Enemies of the *Doctrine*, *Diſcipline*, or *Practice* of *Chriſtiani-*

ſtianity.) As *Truth* will have its *Oppoſers*, ſo thoſe that defend its *Cauſe*, will have *Adverſaries* enough, who will be ſure to ſpare nothing which may *blacken* their Characters, that their *Wiſdom* and *Learning*, *may have* leſs *Efficacy* upon the Minds of the *People*: Whilſt from *ſuch Places* proceed Men who are ever ready to ſtand in the Gap againſt thoſe who would either *undermine* our *Faith*, or *break* our *Communion*; this will open the Mouths of the *Gainſayers*, and make them in the Language of the *Children of* Edom *in the Day of* Jeruſalem, cry, *down with them, down with them, even to the Ground.*

If the *Thoughts* of ſome Men were *Viſible*, we ſhould plainly ſee, that their *Oppoſition* to *Univerſities*, generally proceeds from the *Oppoſition* of *theſe* to their *Errors*, and they are only out of Humor with theſe *Conſtitutions*, becauſe they will not favour their *Principles*. I know ſomething of a more *odious Aſpect* is often pretended, but this is but a *Pretence*, the other is generally at the *bottom*. Tis really their Enmity to our *Church*, that makes them Enemies to the *Seminaries* of it; and tho' they may

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urge other grounds to the *People*, yet they go upon theſe *themſelves* : But this is ſo far from being their *Reproach*, that it is their *Honour*. For *this* puts the *Uſefulneſs* of theſe *Foundations* at preſent, upon the ſame Iſſue with the *Uſefulneſs* of the *Church* of *England*, and I think a *fairer* need not be deſired.

And thus I ſhall leave them both *united* in their *common Intereſts*, to the Protection of GOD, againſt all their Enemies round about, that they may both become *the Glory and Praiſe of the Earth*, *whilſt the Wicked ſhall ſee it and be grieved, he ſhall gnaſh with his Teeth, and melt away*; *the Deſire of the Ungodly ſhall periſh.*

FINIS.